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'PICKETS' VERSUS BULLETS.

THE old regulation-musket, known in the army by the affectionate *sobriquet* of 'Brown Bess,' would sometimes, though not always, carry a bullet with a certain degree of precision about a hundred yards; but beyond that very moderate distance, no one, however expert, could make sure of hitting even a barn-door; the aim of the individual who pulled the trigger, supposing that the state of his nerves permitted him to take aim at all—which a very distinguished general, not very long since deceased, declared to be not invariably the case—having very little to do with the direction taken by the projectile. On momentous occasions, when it was important that shots should not be thrown away, the old instructions were: 'Reserve your fire, my lads, till you can see the whites of the fellows' eyes; then aim low, and blaze away as fast as you can.' That is, nobody thought of doing much execution except at very close quarters; but, like Molière's physician, *nous avons changé tout cela*; and science has furnished us with a musket with which we may begin to blaze away at our adversaries almost as soon as we can see that they are adversaries, and with which a good shot may almost make sure of sending a 'picket' to its mark at something like a thousand yards. The modern picket, therefore—which is the American name for a Minié rifle-ball—is a very much more formidable missile than the old-fashioned bullet; but, whatever may be its advantages over its predecessor as to accuracy of flight, length of range, and penetrating power, there is one disadvantage attending the general employment of the rifled musket from which it is fired. It is not sufficient to substitute for Brown Bess a superior description of firearm; but in order to enable our soldiers to use their weapons with effect, careful training and much practice are requisite, so that the instructing of a recruit is a much more complicated affair than it used to be. We have lately had an opportunity of seeing a great many men trained to the use of the new arm; and it may interest the reader to learn something of the process by which the lad who has perhaps never fired a shot in his life, is converted into a more or less skilful rifleman. There are certain moral results, too, which may be expected to flow from the substitution of a scientifically constructed weapon for the clumsy Brown Bess, and which it is by no means uninteresting to note.

In the first place, then, it is necessary that the future marksman should be taught to judge, with a considerable degree of accuracy, the distance he is

from the object he is to fire at; for, unless he can ascertain that, the new rifle will be scarcely more destructive in his hands than the old musket. The length of range is determined by the degree of elevation; and in order to get this correctly, a sight, the height of which is regulated according to a scale, is fixed in front of the lock; but it is obvious that the true distance must be known before the 'sight' can be properly adjusted, and nothing but practice can enable a man to ascertain this by the eye alone. To some it may appear difficult to teach men to judge, within a comparatively few yards, how far they are from an object placed at from one to nine hundred yards from them; and this, too, under every variety of circumstance, such as differences of level in the size and position of the intervening and surrounding objects, and, above all, in various atmospheric conditions, and amount of light; but if we reflect with what accuracy we habitually judge of such short distances or lengths, in yards, feet, and inches, as those with which we commonly have to do, we shall readily believe that, with practice, the eye may be taught to serve us as faithfully even when it is a question as to scores and hundreds of yards; and experience shews this to be the case. There are, of course, some thick-skulled, non-observing fellows who can never be made to guess their distances correctly; but most of the men soon acquire a considerable facility in so doing, and in practice, it must be remembered that it is not necessary that every man should be quick at it; for a few sharp-eyed lads will leaven a whole lump of stupidity, and enable every one to adjust the 'sight' of his piece with sufficient accuracy.

Instruction in judging distances is managed in this way: The class is drawn up on some open space of ground, and two or more of their number are sent on with a red flag, the men being made to face in the contrary direction to that in which the flag is being carried, so that they shall not be able to count steps, or in any other irregular manner assist themselves in forming a judgment of the distance traversed, which must be decided by the eye alone. As soon as the bearers of the red flag stop, the class faces about, and the sergeant, standing six or seven paces in front of his men, so as to be out of hearing, calls out each man separately, and asks him how far he thinks he is from it. His answer is put against his name in a book ruled for the purpose, and when all have guessed, the true distance is ascertained by measurement—every man getting so many marks or points set down to him, according to the accuracy of his answer—that is, provided he guesses within a certain

number of yards of the truth; for unless he does so, he gets no point at all. If the men are out judging distances for the first time, the differences of opinion will be very wide, private Murphy perhaps thinking that he is full five hundred yards from the object that private Milligan, with great pretension to exactness, declares to be no more than three hundred and twenty-five yards distant; but after a few mornings' practice, Brown and Jones, Murphy and Milligan, come to see things much more in the same light, and their differences are reduced to a small number of yards. In short, most men soon manage to get the number of points they should obtain before being passed on to a more advanced class of students in the art of shooting with the Enfield rifle.

But besides being taught to judge distances, the men have another course of instruction to undergo, before they are put into the first class for ball-practice at the target. They must be taught the principles on which accuracy of aim depends with the peculiar weapon they are to use. For this purpose, stands—something like the stands used to support an engineer's level or the camera of the photographer—are set up at different distances from the target; and the learner, resting his musket on one of these, adjusts the aim to the best of his judgment. It is so contrived that the piece will remain on the stand as pointed, so that the instructor can shew the pupil any error that he may have made, and can make him change the aim either horizontally or vertically as the case requires. When he has been made to level his musket with tolerable accuracy in this way, the pupil is ready to commence firing at the target in the first class; that is, among those who are to fire at a distance of from 100 up to 300 yards. The Enfield rifle being sighted to 900 yards, three classes have been established for practice—namely, of those in the first class, who fire from 100 to 300 yards; of those in the second class, firing from 300 up to 600 yards; and of those in the third class, who fire from 600 to 900 yards; every man being obliged to obtain so many points in the first class before he can pass into the second, and in the second before he can pass into the third. As soon as he has obtained the required number of points in the last class, his course of instruction is complete. All that teaching can do for him has been done, and, unless he be one of those unfortunate mortals, born fumbler, and totally without manual dexterity, he is probably an average marksman. Only a decided genius for the thing will make him a really good shot.

Ball-practice is thus regulated. The class is drawn up in line, a sergeant standing by with book and pencil, as when the men are being made to judge distances. At the word, each man steps forward in succession, delivers his fire, and, accordingly as he has made a good, bad, or middling shot, gets good or bad marks set against his name in the register of the firing. If he misses the target altogether, no signal is made by the marker at the butt, and he gets a 'miss' put against his name; but if he makes a hit, the marker signals by different flags whether the hit is an 'outer'—that is, outside the outer ring—a 'centre'—or within the outer ring—or a bull's-eye. An outer counts one point; a centre, two; and a bull's-eye, three. It will be proper to observe that the width of the target employed varies in proportion to the distance from which the practice is carried on. No change, however, is made in the height of the target, that remaining always about the height of a man. At first, one target, two feet wide by six high—about the size of one man—is used, and several of these targets are placed side by side as the distance becomes greater. At nine hundred yards, eight targets are employed, representing a front of about eight men, and the bull's-eye is made four feet in diameter. Nor

at such a distance as half a mile is a bull's-eye of that diameter by any means easy to hit; for it is obvious that the smallest deviation from the correct line of flight becomes of immense importance when prolonged through such a distance as that. Moreover, the effect of the wind on the flight of the ball, at these long ranges, is found to be very great. A sergeant—who, as we had many opportunities of observing, is a capital shot—assured us, that when firing at the 900 yards' range during a high wind, he found his first ball driven nearly fourteen feet out of the correct course. In his subsequent shots, he allowed that much in his aim, and then succeeded in hitting the bull's-eye several times running.

For the first few hundred yards, the Enfield rifle is fired standing, like the old musket; but at greater distances, it is better to kneel if the object fired at is placed on the same level, or the great elevation given to the piece would require it to be held too low on the shoulder for steadiness. In order to shoot well kneeling, the shooter should plant himself firmly on the right heel, rest his left elbow on his left knee, and so get a capital rest for his piece in the left hand. Another mode of getting a steady aim, particularly when there is much wind—but one which can of course only be adopted under peculiar circumstances, is to lie at full length on the back, with one's 'feet to the foe' or target. The muzzle of the rifle rests on the toes of the right foot, the butt is pressed to the right thigh by the left hand, which is brought across the stomach, and the trigger is pulled as usual by the right hand, the head being raised three or four inches from the ground in order to take aim. Excellent shots are generally made in this curious position, and it may be very advantageously adopted by the sharp-shooter who wishes to be particularly careful of his own person, as well as to make good shots. A sod, a few inches thick, is a complete rampart to a man lying on his back, and he could not well be hit by anything but a chance shell, for he would not expose his head and shoulders even when in the act of firing, as he must do in a greater or less degree if he lay on his stomach.

In ordinary light-infantry skirmishing, the men are extended to the right and left in pairs at about a dozen paces apart. One man fires his piece, and stepping a pace or two aside, reloads, while his companion advances before him, and fires in his turn, and so on—each man alternately advancing to fire and reloading, so long as the forward movement lasts, the 'retiring' being conducted on precisely the same principles. Now, even this drill is carried on with ball-cartridge, so that some idea may be formed of the effect likely to be produced by well-trained men in this kind of fighting, when armed with our improved weapons. Ten or a dozen single targets, of the usual size—two feet wide by six high—are placed in a line, with the proper intervals between them, thus representing a line of the enemy's skirmishers; and a party of men, extended in pairs as above described, fire at them with ball-cartridge, advancing and retiring as if in the presence of an enemy. The men we saw at this light-infantry drill were a party of about twenty of the Royal Engineers, armed with the Lancaster rifle, which is considered to be a better weapon even than the Enfield; but the number of misses compared with the hits, even under these favourable circumstances, plainly shewed how much the difficulty of taking a correct aim is increased by this constant shifting of one's ground. Clearly, in the good old days of Brown Bess, skirmishing in this fashion could not have been very destructive to life. At 400 yards, the hits were very few; but as the line of skirmishers advanced, they of course became more frequent, until, at 100 or 150 yards, there were more hits than misses. In determining the average number

of shots which may be expected to take effect, however, we must take into consideration a circumstance which would assuredly exercise a strong perturbing influence. If the targets were armed with Enfield or Lancaster rifles, and were returning picket for picket, the aim would certainly not be so accurate. Soldiers soon become something given to fatalism; and where bullets are singing and whizzing about their ears, they are enabled to take things all the more coolly if they have some faith in the doctrine that 'every bullet has its billet.' Without impugning any one's courage, then, we may be permitted to believe that many more bullets are billeted for the bull's-eye, whatever that may chance to be, when they are all flying in one direction. But besides this element of disturbance, there is another difficulty which must be taken into account in the calculation. When one party is skirmishing, the other party is skirmishing too; so that the difficulty of making a good shot is increased by the motion of the object fired at; and this element must be allowed for before we can calculate, from the results of target-practice, the probable percentage of hits. Perhaps the most striking result of the Enfield rifle-firing—at least to us—was the effect of a volley, or rather of a series of volleys, fired by twenty men at ten targets, placed close together at 300 yards' distance. The balls pattered like hail upon the iron targets; and it is clear that many a gallant fellow in future will 'lose the number of his mess' before he is near enough to the foe to see the white of his eyes.

But the change from the hap-hazard, load-and-fire-as-fast-as-you-can system of shooting with Brown Bess, to the skilful handling of the rifled musket, can hardly fail to have a very desirable influence on the morale of the soldier. The elaborate training the men now undergo, and the emulation excited among them, must have a considerable effect on their character and habits; and therefore, even in an educational point of view, we gain largely by the improvement in our weapons of war. No one can doubt that this will be the case who passes a few hours watching a class at target-practice, and has observed how lively an interest the men take in the work, particularly when compared with the bored look of the same men engaged in field-drill. For the first time since the days when powder and ball superseded the national bow and arrow, the English soldier has some employment connected with his profession in which he can take an interest, irrespective of mere drill; in which all but hopeless noodles—every day less commonly found among army recruits as elsewhere—are soon perfect; and which, if persisted in too unremittingly, more than any one thing disgusts the soldier with his calling. If no other advantage resulted from the relegation of Brown Bess to the United Service Museum, and other dépôts of military curiosities, we should be amply compensated for the increased cost of the superior description of musket, and the extra expense of the ammunition required for practice. Any stinginess, indeed, in this latter item—ammunition—will necessarily interfere with the progress made by the men as marksmen, and will very materially diminish the other advantages to be derived from the reformation in musketry. Enthusiasm must not be cramped by the denial of a cartridge.

It is well known that in those regiments in which such sports as cricket and foot-ball are encouraged, the men are both more healthy and better conducted than in those in which the men are accustomed to seek recreation in the public-house alone. Target-practice, therefore, may be easily made a pastime as well as a duty; and the men will take to it as willingly as Swiss peasants to practice at the village butt, or as idle fellows to sparrow and pigeon shooting. We must expect to find black sheep in

every flock, and therefore it is not surprising that some men grumble at the extra trouble and time demanded by so much ball-practice; but, generally speaking, they appear to take an interest in what they are about, which is quite refreshing to behold; and do their best, not only to win the prizes offered to the best shots, but to surpass their comrades—the 'chaffing' which constantly goes on at the expense of the bad shots, being in itself sufficient proof of the interest excited. The rewards for good shooting are considerable, reference being had to the moderate scale of a soldier's pay. A penny, twopence, threepence, or fourpence per day extra pay, may be obtained by the most expert marksmen in the company or regiment; and a more chivalrous feeling is appealed to by the giving of a decoration to the best shot, in the shape of a pair of crossed muskets worked in gold embroidery on the sleeve and cap of the prizemen. This extra pay, and this honourable mark—as we understand—the marksman retains for a certain period, and then must win them anew, or, like the holder of Dockett's badge amongst the watermen, yield them up to the better shot.

The writer, a short time since, was witness of a trial of skill between two little buglers, which will serve to shew the excellent moral effect which the new system of teaching men to use their arms skilfully will have on them. Two parties had finished the regulation allowance of ammunition for the day, and there being four spare cartridges left, the buglers—evidently what the French call *enfants de troupe*, children of the regiment—asked if they might 'av a shot.' Neither of the little fellows had ever fired a musket loaded with ball-cartridge before, and much delighted they were at the opportunity of doing so; but the interest excited was not confined to them; the soldiers and the civilian on-lookers being equally anxious to see which would prove himself the better man, or, rather, boy. The distance happened to be two hundred yards; and number one, the biggest boy, fired his first shot, and got an 'outer,' counting one point. This was good work; and the party to which number two belonged thought themselves beaten; but their champion, with his first shot, got a 'centre,' counting two points. Then number one fired again, getting another 'outer,' or one point; and unless number two made at least a hit, it was a dead heat. But number two, taking a very deliberate aim with the musket he had barely strength enough to hold out, again got a 'centre,' or two points, thus beating his opponent by two to one, whereupon his party cheered; and he, taking what is known amongst the genus *gamin* as 'a sight' at his adversary, danced round him like a little cannibal. Here, then, we have proof of the existence of a much healthier state of feeling than that which we find usually prevalent among soldiers who are undergoing the training incident to their calling. In truth, facing right, left, and about; marching and counter-marching, in slow time or quick, like an automaton, at the will of another, must inevitably be dreary work. But the soldier has now an occupation in which he ceases to be a mere machine, and which brings his faculties into play as well as his muscles.

When guard-duty is light, as in many places it must be, a great deal of time hangs heavily on the soldier's hands—always supposing that he is not over-drilled—and his mind is but too often a mere blank. He therefore naturally seeks at the public-house or beer-shop for the amusement and excitement which is a necessity, under one form or another, for every human being; and which, if not to be obtained innocently, will assuredly be obtained at the expense of both health and morals. Health suffers too, as it has of late been conclusively shewn, by the listlessness and weariness inseparable from the monotonous

existence of the soldier; and it is of the highest importance, therefore, to find occupation for his mind, even in a purely sanitary point of view. Of course, it would be utterly absurd to expect that these serious evils—serious, if only on the low ground that the efficiency of the army is thereby diminished, and its cost increased—will be eradicated by anything which the best intentioned rulers can adopt; but giving the men an *interesting* occupation will certainly aid in allaying them. It will help greatly the good effects produced by the improved barrack accommodation, the better regulation of canteens, and the establishment of regimental schools and libraries.

We have already remarked, that the pecuniary rewards offered by the government as an inducement to the men to make themselves skilful marksmen, are considerable, having regard to the scale of the soldier's pay; but if we may form an opinion from our limited experience, the spirit of rivalry will be no less efficacious than the hope of winning the pecuniary rewards, in keeping alive amongst the men that spirit of *good-will*, without which the most elaborate and patient training must remain comparatively valueless. After all, the age we live in is by no means so prosaic as its detractors would have us believe; numbers there are still

Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth;

and admittance into the purely chivalric order of the Victoria Cross is as eagerly sought for by all ranks of fighting-men as it could have been in the days of Cœur-de-Lion himself. To become one of the best shots in the British army is no mean object of ambition for the young soldier to propose to himself; and, to borrow a metaphor from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the badge which proclaims him to be so, may be justly termed 'the Blue Ribbon' of the ranks.

THE UNHIRED SERVANT.

Mr father was a liner merchant of the city of London, and one of the thousands whom the introduction of the power-loom, and the consequent influx of cotton goods, brought to inevitable failure. He was an old man at the time; and though I do not think it broke his heart, he lived only to see his affairs wound up, paid all his creditors to the last shilling, and died; leaving my mother and me with no resource but to sell our furniture, remove from our convenient old house in Cheapside, where he had carried on business, and we had lived as the best merchants' families did in those days, to find a humbler habitation, and work for our living. We had no relations who could help us; my mother had never been strong, and was verging on fifty, but she was a woman of sense and spirit, who would not sit down and lament over her misfortunes, without trying what could be done. I was the only child, then in my nineteenth year, and pretty well qualified to act as a governess; but neither my mother nor I could make up our minds to part; and it seemed like a god-send when Mr Buckells, the auctioneer who sold our furniture, called to say, that Lord Yarmouth was advertising for a respectable person to take charge of a country-seat he had in the county Norfolk. My mother immediately offered her services, and was accepted. His lordship's man of business arranged everything at his office in Chancery Lane. She was to have fifty pounds a year, besides board and residence for herself and me at Fenham Hall, as they

called the country-seat. The lawyer said it was rather lonely, and Mrs Western would be the better for her daughter's company; but one clause in the agreement rather surprised us—namely, that the situation was not to be given up sooner than two years.

'It is strange,' said my mother; 'but we want a home, and cannot afford to be particular.' So she signed the agreement, bought some necessities, and we set out for Lord Yarmouth's seat in Norfolk.

It was towards the end of September; the weather was unusually cold and cloudy for the season, and there seemed every probability of an early winter as we journeyed northward by stage-coach and post-chaise—for railways were yet undreamed of. A greater change from Cheapside could not be well imagined than our new residence. It was a large manor-house, and looked as if it had been built in pieces. There was every variety of architecture, from the early English to the latest Stuart. The oldest part, or northern wing, had been a priory before the Reformation, and had still a monastic look about it; but the whole formed a strong, solid, and lordly mansion, situated on one of those long stretches of level land so frequent in the east of Norfolk; twelve miles from Norwich, three from the village of Fenham, and surrounded by an extensive park with giant trees, thick underwood, and game enough to give the whole House of Commons a week's shooting. The gardens and shrubberies, in design and extent, were worthy of the mansion; they had been laid out in the old-English style, and were tolerably well kept, though somewhat overgrown, as if the care and taste of an owner had been long wanting. There was a lawn in front so large that it looked like a broad strip of meadow-land, bounded by a lake which went deep into the wood, and was frequented by innumerable water-fowl. A carriage-road, shaded by great oaks, skirted the lake, and led to the grand entrance; but the grass was growing thickly about the steps, and the hall-door and bay-windows looked long shut up. There was a noble gallery of pictures, and suites of splendid rooms within, all richly furnished, but in an antiquated fashion. Little of the furniture was newer than Queen Anne's time, and most of it belonged to a much earlier period. I remember chambers hung with real arras, Persian carpets, and cabinets which the Dutch traders brought from Japan in the middle of the seventeenth century, with warrants for the same in Dutch and Latin duly deposited in their drawers. So much old china never came within my vision, nor do I recollect to have seen such fine specimens of those old-world instruments, the dulcimer and harpsichord. The library was filled with the fathers, the schoolmen, and works of Catholic theology. The gallery had family portraits in every variety of costume, from knights in plate-armour to ladies in sacks and high-heeled shoes; but the greater number of them were not of the Yarmouth line—they were all Hartwells—and more melancholy, disappointed faces I never saw; but the strangest thing in that gallery was a magnificently gilt frame hanging opposite the central door with no picture in it. All the house was shut, but not locked up. My mother and I had free access to all its rooms and passages—and they were many—of all shapes and sizes, with no lack of private stairs, side-doors, and very strong closets. Moreover, there was nobody but ourselves on the premises; and the only person in charge when we arrived was Ralph Fairbrother—a man who acted in the double capacity of steward and gardener.

Ralph's hair was perfectly gray, but he was still strong and active—a middle-sized man, with a thin

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muscular frame, a remarkably sober look, and a reserved, taciturn disposition. His dwelling was a large and very comfortable cottage, standing in a shady hollow where the park and gardens met, and managed by his only daughter, Nelly; a young woman who was deaf and dumb, but industrious, tidy, and apparently intelligent.

His wife looked twenty years older than himself, and lived, whether from choice or necessity, in her bed, I could never be sure, for the good woman shewed no signs of disease, and could get up with surprising activity when it suited her pleasure. Ralph was supreme over all the outdoor concerns of the hall. He employed and dismissed labourers by his own authority; and judging from their style of living, which was by no means economical, his services were liberally rewarded. But Mrs Fairbrother was supreme over him; and it was generally believed that whatever he said or did was under her special direction. She was a tall, wrinkled, sour-looking dame, possessed of such an idea of her own consequence, that she despised her husband, her daughter, in short, the whole Fairbrother race; and had an extraordinary dislike to the proprietors of the hall, past and present, speaking of them all in a contemptuously familiar fashion, so different from the usual tone of family dependents, that my mother doubted her sanity; particularly on one occasion, when she gave us to understand that she ought to have been Lady Yarmouth. Mrs Fairbrother was sane enough, however, and willing enough also to tell the complete history of Fenham Hall, and how it came into the Yarmouth family—which, by the way, was a curious illustration of what men will do for the lands and rentals they must leave so soon.

The original owners were the before-mentioned Hartwells, a line of squires who traced their pedigree far above the Norman Conquest, to one of the roving chiefs of Denmark, said to have won lands from the Norfolk Saxons, turned Christian, and built a priory some time in the ninth century. That priory, with all its lands, his descendants got back at the Reformation, of which they were zealous supporters, made it their house, and went on enlarging hall and estate, getting rich by marriages, and keeping clear of public difficulties, till about the year 1745, when the young squire, Richard, being the last of the male line, not only turned Catholic, but got so deeply involved with the Pretender, that he was obliged to take refuge on the continent. The sentence of attainder for high treason was passed against him and his posterity; and the Yarmouth family having some influence with the government, came into possession as next of kin. They were distant relations of the Hartwells, and greatly impoverished at the time. The then Lord Yarmouth and Squire Richard had been college-companions at Oxford. The former was far-sighted, keen, and cunning; the latter was weak, vain, and credulous; and the story went that young Hartwell's conversion in religion and politics had been more than abetted by his crafty companion, who thus obtained his hall and lands. The Yarmouths had kept them for almost half a century. The witty lord had been duly succeeded by his son and grandson. Squire Richard's claims had been also transmitted, by his marriage with a French lady, distantly related to the House of Turenne. He left a daughter, who, in her turn, married a Scotch gentleman, one of the Frasers, with whom she returned to Britain, where a daughter was born to them. Mrs Fraser was a woman of uncommon spirit, as became her maternal descent. With the help of certain papers left by her father, and the aid of her husband's relations, she commenced a suit to reverse the attainder and recover the estate for her child. Parliament was petitioned, the ministers were dealt with, the law-lords were engaged,

and there was every probability of success, when the young Lord Yarmouth, who had just reached his majority, and was said to bear a strong resemblance to his grandfather, proposed to settle the business by marrying the heiress of the Hartwells, and thus uniting for ever the rival claims. Their wedding was celebrated with great splendour and rejoicing. Miss Fraser was just seventeen, beautiful, and accomplished; but two years after her marriage, she eloped with an obscure adventurer, who called himself Captain Fitzwilliam; and all that was ever heard of her afterwards, was, that she had died in great poverty in the old city of Padua, where the captain left her. Lord Yarmouth's marriage was of course dissolved by act of parliament, after bringing an action, and being duly awarded damages. He formed a more advantageous alliance with a dual house, and had a son and heir to succeed him; but his second lady and he had separated by mutual consent, his son was borrowing money from Jews on post-obits, and none of the family had slept two nights at Fenham Hall for twenty years.

Nothing could induce Mrs Fairbrother to attempt any explanation of the latter fact, beyond a decided shake of her head. At that point she always returned to the Hartwell line, with whose sins and sorrows the gardener's lady seemed particularly well acquainted. There was a younger brother who had pushed his elder into the lake as they played beside it, and ran home to tell that he was heir. There was a squire who had killed his Jew creditor, buried him in the park, and never had rest with his hounds tearing up the grave. There was a lady who had given her squire cause of jealousy with a handsome cousin; the pair were believed to have eloped from a Shrovetide merry-making; the squire went abroad, leaving his heir and lands to the care of a faithful steward, and died fighting in the Low Countries; but years after, two skeletons were found locked up in a deep and long-disused wine-cellar. Moreover, a strain of wild and violent insanity had come down their generations, whether from the roving Dane or with the Fenham priory and lands, Mrs Fairbrother could not certify; but there was a strong room in the northern wing of the hall with grated windows and an iron-bound door, where she insisted that three-and-twenty heirs, heiresses, and owners of the Hartwell domains, closed their lives under the care of keepers.

The Fenham villagers supplemented this chronicle with Mrs Fairbrother's own antecedents. Curious enough, they all entertained the very same dislike to her which she exhibited for the owners of the hall. Their invariable account was, that the gardener's wife knew all about poor Lady Yarmouth, as they called the unlucky first countess; for she was her maid at the time, and had been well paid by my lord, or somebody; Ralph Fairbrother got three hundred pounds and that fine place by marrying her, though he had been wild in his youth, run away to sea, and come back as poor as a church-mouse. Notwithstanding these reminiscences of his early days and doings, Ralph's sway over them was almost boundless. They were altogether a set of country labourers—the only trades-people being the landlord of the ale-house, who was also chandler and draper to the entire village; and an old tailor, and his wife, who did all the needle-work. I cannot say whether or not the schoolmaster's travels have now extended to Fenham; but at the time of my story, a more uncultivated, uncivil, and ill-mannered set of cottagers were not to be found in the eastern counties. Neither day nor Sunday school had ever been within their bounds, to my knowledge. Nobody but the before-mentioned landlord could either write or read, and his skill in those useful arts was rather limited. The parish church was six miles distant. Its incumbent and his curate agreed that they could

do no good in Fenham, and there was probably some truth in that opinion. Besides ignorance and more than common stupidity, the inhabitants were one and all animated with a spirit of blunt and vulgar independence, which made all dealings with them disagreeable, and all attempts at improvement fruitless. Every family had a cottage and a field or so, on which they existed in a savage, slovenly manner—man and woman half idle, when they were not employed about the hall; and, as Ralph could get no labourers but themselves, he and they carried on a kind of intermittent warfare, always grumbling at each other, and often breaking out into open hostility.

My mother and I had a sad time of it, endeavouring to get a maid-of-all-work among them. Whatever servants had been at the hall, they were all discharged and gone before our arrival. The apartments assigned us were situated in the northern wing, which, under the Yarmouth domination, had been mostly appropriated to domestic purposes. They consisted of six neat though queerly shaped rooms, opening on a short corridor, which had a side-entrance from what was called the evergreen shrubbery, a grove of box, laurel, and holly, growing up almost to the windows. My mother's parlour, with my bedroom and hers opening from it, was on one side; on the other, our kitchen, with rooms for stores and a servant—the whole forming a comfortable, convenient little residence in a corner of that great house, which lay round us all shut up and silent, with its vast rooms and rich old-fashioned furniture. Our home had been fitted up expressly for a resident housekeeper some fifteen years before. Several staid and discreet ladies had come from Suffolk, Lincolnshire, and all the northern counties to inhabit it; but none of them had stayed for a second winter, and the honest people of Fenham assured us that neither should we. 'For them mad Hartwells was always a coming back.'

The tailor's wife, who was the most civilised of the community, and had sewed for the hall forty years at least, declared it to be her private opinion that those unearthy visitors had considerably increased since the poor lady's business, which was not to be wondered at, as she was one of the old stock—the rightful heiress, if all tales were true; and people did say my lord had not been in the dark about her going off with that captain; but he and Mrs Fairbrother knew best. They had taken her picture out of the frame in the gallery, to keep the new servants from knowing her, in case she was ever seen; and my lord being a saving man, meant to put his second lady into it; but it was of no use, for the family could not stay.

These were encouraging details for two ladies, fresh from London city, to hear regarding the old country-house in which they were bound to live at least two years. My mother had a deal of strong sense, however, and I think she taught me some of it. We had in common a good life, a good conscience, and a tolerable education. There are no better ramparts against superstitious fears, and they stood us in good stead, notwithstanding the reputation of the place, the strange echoes which the large empty house gave back to every sound, the wonderful howling of the wind in its turret chimneys, and the shadows cast by its old trees. We never got thoroughly frightened, nor met with anything out of the common course, except the transaction I am about to relate.

When Lord Yarmouth's lawyer admitted that the hall was solitary, he certainly did not overstep the truth. There was not a house within sight of it but the gardener's cottage, which was a good quarter of a mile off; yet neither theft nor robbery had been attempted; partly, because it was generally known that there was nothing but old furniture in the mansion—his lordship having removed his plate and all portable goods of value; and partly

owing to the popular belief in the returning Hartwells. That article of faith stood sadly in our way with the before-mentioned maid. No woman of any age would consent to sleep at the hall. We were obliged to dispense with their services early in the evening, that they might get home before it grew dark, and could not expect them earlier than about twelve next day. I employ the plural number, because, in our first season, we had on an average a new servant every fortnight. Some were so desperately dirty that they could not be retained on any terms; others broke everything that came in their way. One almost set the place on fire; a second accommodated herself with my mother's tabinet gown, and went to church in it on a wet Sunday; a third dropped our entire stock of china on the stone-floor of the kitchen, and fled home, declaring she had seen three of the Hartwells looking in at the window. After that tale was made public, we could get no servant at all. The want would not have been great had ourselves only been concerned; I could have done all our household work. Ralph Fairbrother supplied us with all manner of provisions, according to contract; but the hall and its furniture were to be kept in order, and that was a task beyond our united strength.

In this strait, my mother thought of applying to an acquaintance of ours in Norwich, one of the few with whom we corresponded in spite of altered fortunes. She was a merchant's wife, a notable housekeeper, and a most worthy woman. Her reply was decidedly satisfactory. She knew a housemaid, steady, honest, industrious, and not afraid of a solitary place. If my mother and I would only come to Norwich, spend a day with her, and see the girl, she might go back with us to the hall, in case we thought her suitable. Mrs Turner's invitation was kind, and the chance of seeing civilised life, though but for a day, was too good to be missed. We went to the old capital of Norfolkshire in a spring-cart, the only vehicle obtainable. My mother had a great chat about old times; I saw the newest fashions; the maid was seen and arranged with, but there were unexpected difficulties in the way of her immediate coming. The girl looked strong, active, and not too young; she had a good-humoured face, professed no fear of ghosts, and had a sort of acquaintance with Fenham Hall; her grandmother, mother, and two aunts, having been housemaids there in regular succession. The no-popery cry was then loud, in consequence of the Catholic Emancipation Bill; but my mother had no dread of the Jesuits, and shewed no unwillingness to engage Sally Steen, though she was a sound believer in the old faith, and retired, as it were, to service in the convent of the Sisters of Mercy, whenever she was out of place. The lady-superior was somehow related to Sally, on the mother's side, where, it seems, there was high and ancient blood to boast; but though the Catholicism and the convent had no terrors for us, we were disappointed in our hope of bringing home a useful servant. Sally's brother was to be married that day-week; she had promised to be at the wedding; besides, her things were to be put in order. In short, Sally could not come for at least eight days. Still, there was the prospect of a maid at last. Mrs Turner gave her the highest character—by the way, she had once served our friend for six months—and we went home, after settling with Sally to come by the Fenham carrier's wagon, and enter on her duties at the hall on Monday week.

The evening in which she was expected, found us talking and knitting by the fire. The night had fallen, for it was about the middle of December; but the weather had been clear and frosty for some days, and we could see the moonlight silvers on our windows, over which the curtains had not been drawn, as my mother said the blaze would cheer Sally's heart

coming up the lonely park, and guide her to our corner of the mansion. We were comforting ourselves with the rubbing-up of the fire-irons, stoves, and large mahogany tables should get from her vigorous arms, as also on the peace and pleasure we should have with a good-humoured, trustworthy servant for the rest of that winter. Our tea-table was spread, and our tea-kettle singing to welcome Sally when she came in cold and tired from her journey in the wagon. There it was at last; we heard the heavy wheels roll slowly up the carriage-road; the carrier knew how to open the park-gate, luckily, for no keeper had lived at the lodge for years. I went out with a lantern, and there they were—trusty Thomson, the carrier, with all manner of parcels for us and the Fairbrothers; Sally, with her gray cloak and hood drawn over her bonnet, her large deal-box, and a bundle under her arm. Thomson was in a hurry with goods for the village innkeeper; the box, &c., had to be got in quickly. Sally was some time getting herself in order to pay her respects to my mother; but at length, in she came. There were two candles and a bright fire, and all their light was requisite to make us credit our own eyes. Instead of the ruddy, robust, good-natured looking young woman under thirty, with whom we had talked at Norwich, there walked into the parlour, very deliberately, a woman whose age I could not tell, but she was not young, tall, large-boned, and thin to the point of reminding one of a skeleton. She had on a coarse gray gown, of plain stuff, a muslin cap plaited closely round her face, which might have been handsome once, for the features were finely cut and regular, but it was long and thin beyond expression; there was no colour about it, but a streak or two of intensely black hair, straggling on the forehead, which, by the way, was broad and low, and a fixed corpse-like expression, such as I remembered to have seen in the face of one of the exiled monks of La Trappe at Spitalfields.

Her tone of voice was at once shrill and hollow, and she did not waste her time with many words; it was merely: 'Good-evening,' and she was sorry to be so late, but the wagon had been long on the road. Neither of us could speak for some minutes, and I saw there was terror as well as surprise in my mother's face; but she recovered her composure, told Sally she was in very good time, asked her some questions about her brother's wedding, and our friend Mrs Turner, which the woman answered quite satisfactorily, and sent her to have her tea comfortably by the kitchen-fire.

'Is that the woman we engaged, Sophy?' she said, as soon as the door was shut.

'I don't think it is, mother.'

'Neither do I; but what brings her here? and how can she answer so readily? Could seeing her by night and day make such a difference?'

We tried to persuade ourselves of that; but both went to bed with a queer uncomfortable feeling; and my mother looked as if her dreams had been troubled next morning. Moreover, the daylight did not make Sally a whit more like the girl we engaged in Norwich. Her face kept the same stony look we had observed overnight. She went about her work willingly, and like one used to it, but without word, or smile, or sign of cheerful activity. My mother's questions, remarks, and observations elicited no evidence against her identity; but seeing is believing—she was not the woman we had seen at Mrs Turner's. The hall had always been a dreary residence, and this strange servant did not add to its cheerfulness. Why she had come, troubled us for many a day, but we could make nothing of it; besides, she did her work well, required no watching, seemed to have no dread of the Hartwells on her mind, did not complain of loneliness, did everything she was told,

and was on the whole a valuable, though not a lively servant. My mother's letter on the altered appearance of our maid seemed to amuse Mrs Turner. She wrote by return of post, which in Fenham was a weekly occurrence, to say that Sally had been at her house only two hours before she set out with the wagoner, looking just as usual; and for her own part, she could not help thinking that fancy was playing a trick in that old house of ours. Mrs Turner was above deceit of any kind. There was no probable motive for substitution. The strange-looking woman served us faithfully; so we made up our minds that it must be the veritable Sally Steen, who had come to us from Norwich, and that our eyes and memories had somehow deceived us. One thing was certain—Sally had profited by her residence in the convent. Early and late, she was repeating to herself aves, prayers, and penitential psalms. I caught sight of an iron cross and rosary hung round her neck, and carefully covered by the gray gown, and her devotions were generally prolonged far into the night. My mother had a sincere respect for the faiths and forms in which other souls found comfort. Sally's abundant prayers were no stumbling-block to us, though mostly addressed to the Virgin and St Mary Magdalene. The household went on well and quietly for some weeks; we had got fairly into the belief that all was right, and were preparing for our lonely Christmas, when a new element was added to the mysteries of Fenham Hall.

I happened to be restless and wakeful one night. It was still frosty weather, with that deep silence in the wintry air which makes sounds distinct, however faint or far off. Everybody had been in bed for hours; I had heard the parlour clock strike two, when somewhere in the large silent house there began a noise as if some one were delving or digging with all their might at very hard ground. I listened as long as my breath would hold; it was not fancy; the digging went on regularly; I could catch the sound of spade or pick coming in contact with stones, and felt sure it was within the hall. I had some courage, though I was not then twenty; my mother had taught me that there was no honour in being easily frightened. My candle was lighted as quietly as possible. Everything was just as we had left it; the kitchen was dark; so was Sally's room, and its door tightly closed; but the sound of the digging went on, till our poor cat, seeing me invade her nightly solitude, jumped up with a loud mew. Then it suddenly ceased; I listened for some time, walked about my room, at length extinguished the candle, and got into bed, but I heard no more of it for that night.

Two or three mornings after, my mother came to breakfast, looking as if she had not slept well. I had not mentioned the digging to her, meaning to watch and see if fancy had been playing me a trick; but as I poured out the tea, she said, looking firmly at me: 'Sophy, did you hear any noise in the house last night?'

Mutual questions and explanations followed, of course. The very same sound which so astonished me had been heard by my mother night after night all the previous week; she, too, had walked about, candle in hand, but could see nothing, and the noise had always ceased when she made any audible movement.

'Shall we speak to Sally?' said I. 'Or do you think it would frighten her?'

'No,' said my mother. 'I think she has something to do with it. Last Wednesday night, I tried her door; it was fast locked, and there was no breathing of any sleeper inside. Our best plan is to watch and say nothing. I have gone over all the rooms, and even the wine-cellars; I have been in Sally's room too, and in the strong room; there is nothing moved,

nothing out of place; but, Sophy, I am sure the noise was in that direction.'

The strong room of Mrs Fairbrother's chronicle was situated immediately behind our kitchen, and could be reached by a private stair leading up from a dark closet at the inner end of the corridor. It was said to have been constructed out of the priory chapel; but except its vaulted roof and the traces of larger windows in its thick walls, there was no appearance of those days about it. The grated windows kept their place, and the iron-barred door; but under the Yarmouth administration it had become a receptacle for the better sorts of lumber—remnants of old armour, dilapidated hunting-gear, pictures damaged by the cleaners, and great chests of family papers. It was one of my amusements in that solitary winter to turn over its curious contents, and wonder what had become of the secret chapel which, according to a tradition preserved by the old people of Fenham, Squire Richard had made for himself somewhere in the hall, and ornamented in a most costly manner when he turned Catholic. There were no relics of the kind in the strong room; but I was poking behind one of the chests a day or two after our talk about Sally, when I came upon a roll of painter's canvas. It was a picture. I drew it up to the window, for the evening light was growing dim, and read that it was the portrait of Madeline Teresse, seventeenth Countess of Yarmouth, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

That was the picture which had been taken out of its frame to keep the servants from knowing the unlucky lady who died so miserably at Padua, in case she thought proper to revisit the hall. I was not very superstitious, but my hair did begin to rise when the waning light shewed me the very image of our unaccountable servant. It was younger, richly dressed in a bygone fashion, and had not the fixed ghastly look; but the resemblance was so striking that I let fall the canvas, and covered my eyes with a fearful conviction that some of the Fenham legends were true.

There was no more poking in the strong room that evening; and after a long debate with myself by our parlour fire, I came to the resolution of telling my mother, and asking her to sit up with me that night.

'We will sit up, Sophy,' she said, 'and try to make out the digging business. But you have been frightened by an accidental resemblance. If the dead do ever return to this earth, it must be for some great providential purpose, and not to frighten honest people in the course of their daily duties. Sally is a strange creature, and, I fear, not of sound mind, though she works wisely enough. It is our best policy to watch closely, but not to let her know that we suspect anything.'

We did watch all that night, with candles ready to light at a minute's warning. Sally had been given to understand we had gone to bed as usual, but all the long night there was no sound in the house; and the very next, when we were both worn out and fast asleep, my mother, whose slumbers were much the lightest, was awakened by the delving in full play, which ceased, as formerly, the moment she came out with her candle. Night after night it was the same. We sat up and watched till our nerves and our courage failed us, without hearing a sound; yet our deepest sleep was broken by the noise of spade or pick clanking against stones, or delving some stubborn soil. Another strange and rather disagreeable circumstance was, that in spite of all our concealment, Sally appeared to know that we had an eye upon her. She watched us in all times and places, and a fiery look of fierce and frantic anger began to burn in her black eyes.

'What are you spying about me for?' she cried, rushing into the parlour one morning as we sat at

breakfast. 'What do you get up at night and come out with candles for? There's plenty to make noise about this old house besides me, if all stories are true—and they are true. I have heard them opening the doors, and seen them looking in at the windows. It's a doomed place, an ill-got property, and will never come to good. Leave it, and go back to London as fast as you can.'

'Sally,' said my mother with great composure, though her lips were white, and her servant's eyes looked terrible, 'we do not watch you, but the house, as we are bound to do. If you find it uncomfortable from any cause, I am willing to pay you your wages, and let you leave my service.'

'Wages—service!' muttered Sally, growing suddenly cowed and bewildered; and she slunk out of the room, muttering something else which we could not hear.

Our breakfast was not an important affair after that demonstration. We felt that, whatever the strange creature meant, or might be, it was neither safe nor easy for us to remain in the solitary house in her company, and Sally had evidently no intention of going. She went to her work as usual, and as if nothing had happened. Even my mother did not care to speak to her again on the subject; the dread of her had fallen on us both. But something must be done; and after a thousand plans formed and found impracticable, we thought of taking counsel of the Fairbrothers. A kind of mutual repulsion had existed between them and us, from the first. Ralph never came to the hall except when he was wanted; and his lady's airs were not calculated to make one seek her in the back-room where she chose to abide; but they were our only neighbours, and we took an afternoon walk to the cottage on the following day. I would not leave my mother alone with Sally, though she had been wonderfully steady ever since the morning explosion, and the night had passed without noise. We found Mrs Fairbrother in her accustomed place; she had not been out of bed that winter, and said she did not intend getting up again till May. Ralph had gone to Norwich on his lordship's business; he had no mind but that of his spouse, however, we knew; and after propitiating her with the kindest of inquiries about her health in that trying weather, my mother related our perplexities.

'Sally Steen,' said she, turning her face to the wall, and talking as if to herself; 'I mind the jade well. She took part with that good-for-nothing creature who went off with the captain.' Mrs Fairbrother always spoke of her former mistress with great contempt. 'That was because they were all papists together, and given to the same goings-on. I know it all. It's a digging of her grave she is every night; they do that for penance after uncommon sins; but I'll settle her.'

With this reflection, Mrs Fairbrother got up, took out of her cupboard, hard by her bed, a plum-coloured satin gown, made in the height of the short-waisted fashion, a lace-trimmed mantle of the same antiquity, a beaver hat, and a pair of morocco boots, with exceedingly sharp toes. In these she proceeded to array herself with the alacrity of a person bound on some great enterprise, and then desired us to come along, and she would settle Sally Steen soon enough.

The first thing I saw as we approached the hall, was Sally standing in the grand entrance. She had opened the great door to its full extent, and was gazing out over lawn and lake through the frosty haze with which the winter-day was closing.

The moment Mrs Fairbrother caught sight of her, she dashed forward, crying: 'I'll bring the jade to her senses;' but the next she stopped short, and stood like one terror-struck; while Sally, clearing the steps with one bound, rushed down upon her, the

black eyes glaring like those of a lion, and the hard hands clutching as if to tear her in pieces. The gardener's wife knew her danger, and fled screaming across the lawn, but Sally pursued her. Unable to follow or assist, we stood rooted to the spot. They neared the lake; and on its very edge the frantic woman seized her prey, satin gown and all, and dashed her in; but Mrs Fairbrother had a grasp on her straggling hair, and in they went together. We saw them plunge and grapple in the deep water, which surged and heaved as if the struggle were still going on below. Our cries at last brought two of the labourers out of the garden; but all was over; neither ever rose again; and the men said the lake was fathoms deep at that part. It was just where the young squire had pushed in his elder brother; and they could do nothing till Ralph came home.

Ralph did come home next morning; the lake was dragged for the bodies, and they were both found with shocking traces of mutual violence on them. There was a coroner's inquest, and a verdict of homicide and insanity. But in the course of the inquiry it came out—we never could ascertain from what quarter—that the woman who had come as our servant was not Sally Steen, but a crazed nun from the convent of the Sisters of Mercy—said to have lived long on the continent, and been given to strange austerities. The establishment could, or would, give no account of her, but that her name was Sister Magdalene, that she had been allowed to reside in their convent for a few months; and that they believed her of unsound mind. The cause of our nightly disturbance was, however, explained by an examination of the room she had occupied in the hall. Behind her bed the thick wall was broken through, and a clear passage opened into the crypt of the ancient chapel, which had been walled up and forgotten for ages. Its floor had been dug and delved in every direction, as if somebody had been searching for hidden treasure. Two stone-coffins and half a skeleton were laid bare; but the object of her midnight search had not been found; for a year after, when the place was altered and repaired for young Lord Yarmouth, there was discovered, buried deep in the only corner she had left untouched, a pair of massive candlesticks of solid gold, a large crucifix of the same precious metal, and a complete service of plate for the celebration of Catholic worship. I never learned how the Yarmouth family disposed of them; but it was the general belief that they had been hidden there by Squire Richard's chaplain, when the ruin of the Jacobite cause sent his master into exile, and gave the hall to strangers. The ghastly-looking woman must have known something of this, and entered our service on purpose to search for them, with the connivance of the real Sally Steen. That individual was afterwards known to be at service in London; but neither we nor our friends could ever get a sight of her, nor could we ever make out who it was that came in her stead. Ralph Fairbrother, who, by the way, lamented his wife as little as governed men generally do, had a kind of short-hand explanation of the matter which he would never enlarge—it was, that Mrs Fairbrother would have been wiser to have stayed in her bed. She thought it was one of the Steens who had served there long ago, and wanted to shew her airs; but people did not always die when it was said they did; and that drowning business was just the settling of an old account in his opinion. Whether the Yarmouth family agreed with him or not, they shewed a strong inclination to hush up the matter. They paid my mother liberally, and allowed us to leave the hall at the beginning of the New-year. We set up our own little home at Paddington, soon after, and got on wonderfully. My mother has left me for the better country, and I have been called Mrs George

Turner these thirty years; but I never hear of a lonely old house in the country without recollecting our unhired servant.

CARLYLE'S HISTORY OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.

CONCLUDING ARTICLE.

We left off with a gloomy intimation that days of increasing discord were coming for Friedrich Wilhelm and his son. The sudden death of George I.—most impressively painted by Mr Carlyle—had shaken the spirits of his Prussian majesty; to a surprising extent, he 'having fountains of tears withal hidden in the rocky heart of him not suspected by every one.' Then came anxieties as to what political course George II. might take, and, on the other hand, there was a 'huff of quarrel, the consummation of a good many long existing grudges with his neighbour of Saxony, August, king of Poland.' In addition to which, Wilhelmina hints at disturbance of the 'royal digestive apparatus'—a consequence, probably, of 'the frequent carousals with Seckendorf'; so that we need not wonder to be told that his majesty became valetudinary and very melancholy, a state of things much aggravated by a worthy Monsieur Franke, a well-known pietist of the day, who gave ghostly counsel to the king—a pious but lugubrious man, who condemned all pleasures—'damnable all of them, he declared, even hunting and music.' We may easily guess the reactionary effect of this bigotry on the mind of the crown-prince. Plans of abdication, of retirement to Wusterhausen—most dreary of royal rural retreats—began to occupy the king's mind, to the infinite dismay of Seckendorf and Grumkow, who were well aware of the prince's English predilections, and aversion to their line of policy. Something must be done, or their snare will be broken, and their royal prey delivered! A bright thought strikes them: what so desirable as change of scene for hypochondriac symptoms? Of all changes, what so enlivening as a visit to the court of August of Saxony, a 'gay, eupeptic son of Belial,' willing to be reconciled to Prussia, and to overlook certain recruiting irregularities on Saxon territories, for the tall-soldier hobby has got our Friedrich Wilhelm into trouble again in a fresh quarter. By the aid of a little underhand planning and plotting, an invitation to the Dresden carnival is given and accepted, and Friedrich Wilhelm and his son set out thither in the January of 1728. The visit lasted a month, and is chiefly notable to us because of its bearing on the crown-prince. 'Never were there such thrice-magnificent carnival amusements, illuminations, operas, comedies, sow-baitings, reviewings, dinners of never-imagined quality; other fascinations too, for this Saxon court is a 'wonderful Armida garden, sure enough.' Alas for the youth of sixteen, to whom all this comes in too, too 'pleasant contrast with the Potsdam guard-house!' The miseries this visit to a depraved court 'brought into his existence—into his relations with a father very rigorous in principle, and with a universe still more so—were neither few nor small.' The habits now formed continue for the next four or five years. The prince 'consorts chiefly with dissolute young fellows, as Lientenants Katte, Keith, and others of their stamp.' 'The bright young soul, with its fine strengths and gifts, wallows like a young rhinoceros in the mud-bath; gets out, indeed, but not uninjured—alas! tragically dimmed of its finest radiances for the remainder of life. Enough of all that.'

King August paid a return-visit to Berlin in the May following, and it was 'sublime in the extreme;' the 'frugal Friedrich Wilhelm,' stimulated by the

magnificence of Polish majesty, 'lighting up his dim court into insurpassable brilliancy for once, regardless of expense.' Yet, when all was done, the very everyday result, according to Wilhelmina, was, that 'at table they drank much, talked little, and bored one another a great deal.' August of Poland was 'extremely attentive to Wilhelmina, but, by the blessing of Heaven, nothing came of that;' and in Queen Sophie's sanguine soul the double-marriage project was bright as ever. The long-growing disaffection between father and son breaks out. We begin to hear of 'surlly gusts of indignation, not unfrequently of cuffs and strokes—still worse, studied neglect and contempt, so as not even to help the prince at table, but to leave him fasting while the others eat.' All this is very hard for a high-spirited youth of seventeen to bear. He writes about this time a most dutiful and submissive letter to his 'dear papa,' imploring to be taken into favour; and receives, in reply, a very implacable, 'ill-spelt, abstruse, and intricate note,' in which he is styled an 'effeminate fellow, who can neither ride nor shoot,' and reproached with 'frizzling his hair like a fool, and not cutting it off.' Here we have the old grievance become chronic. A very cantankerous letter, in short, leading us to suspect much disturbance of the royal digestive apparatus; the more so, as we find that a few months later the king, after much fierce riding, 'after an unparalleled hunting-bout, during which 3602 wild swine were slaughtered, was laid up at Potsdam—with—a fit of gout—gout!—which is a terrible message to a man.' 'His majesty's age is not forty-one till August coming; but he has hunted furiously'—and then those carousals with Seckendorf. Yet here the better side of his character begins to reappear.

Though Friedrich Wilhelm 'suffered extremely, he never neglected his royal duties in any press of pain.' Content with but an hour or two of sleep, the 'top of the morning' is always devoted to his official secretaries and their papers. After dinner, he would paint in oil, or do light prince-work. Sickness, so often an angel in the house, has brought the wife, too, back to her duty. 'Always at the head of the bed sat her majesty the queen, sometimes with the king's hand laid in hers, and his face turned up to her as if he sought assuagement.' 'Sometimes, too, the crown-prince read aloud in some French book, with a voice of melodious clearness.' True, there is a reverse side to this pleasing picture. His majesty has spurts of impatience; and certain men, in spite of his esteem for them, become personally antipathetic, and 'make his gout worse;' yet surely, on the whole, this sick-bed affords a pleasing interlude, if it had not been for the kaiser and his pragmatic sanction!

Friedrich is all the more steadfast, because kaiser's cause now appears exclusively German. He diligently drills his sixty thousand men, and 'changes his tune to wife and children,' according to the public news. If England favour the emperor, he smiles on the domestic circle; if England frown on the pragmatic sanction, 'crockery flies through the rooms of the Prussian palace, and blows descend on the poor prince's back.' Nor does Wilhelmina escape. She, too, warmly attached as she is to her brother, and suspected of connivance in his and the queen's underhand schemes, is become painfully obnoxious to her violent-tempered father. At her head, too, plates are thrown, at her blows are aimed—all which brutality Mr Carlyle charges mainly on the two 'devil diplomatists Grumkow and Seckendorf,' seldom if ever blaming his hero, but earnestly regretting that no one could have 'got a bit of rope, and hanged these two diplomatic swindlers, as clearly of the scoundrel genus.'

A note from Frederick to his mother, dated Potsdam, December 1729, gives us a painful insight

into his trials. 'The king,' he writes, 'has entirely forgotten that I am his son. This morning I came into his room, as usual. At the first sight of me, he sprang forward, seized me by the collar, and struck me a shower of cruel blows with his rattan. . . . I am driven to extremity; I have too much honour to endure such treatment, and I am resolved to put an end to it in one way or another.' In what way, unfortunate prince? Wilhelmina knows too well, though she strives to reassure her anxious mother. Flight is not a new idea to her sorely oppressed brother, who is not quite without faults, though, on his side too.

If only he would choose better companions, sighs Wilhelmina, and lead a more regular life. Lieutenant Keith, a 'wild companion' enough, is gone, it is true; but he is succeeded by one still more dangerous—by a young Captain Katte, of whom we shall hear much more anon. 'He had wit, book-culture, acquaintance with the world, polite manners,' all which recommended him, no doubt, to the favour of the prince; but again, 'he affected the free-thinker, and carried libertinism to excess,' and was too surely a dangerous adviser here in the Berlin element with lightnings going. And still, in the midst of all other difficulties, there is the great central difficulty, the double-marriage treaty hanging fire—the king of Prussia now insisting that it shall only be a single marriage—willing, and indeed thankful, to dispose of Wilhelmina to the English Fred, but resolute against the union of the obnoxious Fritz to the Princess Amelia. However, the English answer being steadily 'both marriages or none,' the negotiation may be considered virtually extinct, when, in the month of June 1730, Friedrich Wilhelm and his son set out to the camp of Radewitz, which was 'one of the sublimest scenic military exhibitions in the history of the world.' 'In this pleasure-camp, where the eyes of so many strangers were directed to him, the crown-prince was treated like a disobedient boy,' 'mockery added to manual outrage,' 'beaten like a slave while lodged like a royal highness.' Little wonder that the poor prince should make up his mind to run; should concoct schemes of flight with Katte at Berlin; should discover in the projected tour to the Reich, in which he is to accompany his father, and in the nearness to the French side of the Rhine which this tour will insure, facilities for escape, and eventually for reaching England.

In July, this tour was taken. Friedrich Wilhelm, 'driven nearly mad' himself—never quite sane, we suspect—'by fate and the two black-artists, is driving everybody so.' He takes the crown-prince with him lest he run away, and yet bullies him as a spiritless wretch for submitting to such treatment. A more painful history than this of their journey to the Reich it were impossible to conceive. As they sail down the Rhine, the final catastrophe occurs. A letter is found from the crown-prince to Katte; 'the treasonable flight-project is indisputable as the sun at noon.' At Bonn, the prince confides it all to Seckendorf—how that he could no longer stand indignities, actual strokes; how that, but for his mother's and his sister's sake, he would have fled long ago; that for a life such as his had become, he cared little. Would the king but parlon the poor gentlemen he had implicated, he would disclose everything—a noble and touching confidence this, made to Seckendorf, the fountain of all his woes. Seckendorf pleads for him to the king; but the first thing done on their return to Berlin is the arrest of the prince, and of poor young Katte too. 'The scenes that follow,' observes Mr Carlyle, 'are unusual in royal history, and have been reported in the world with infinite noise and censure, made up of laughter and horror. What we can well say is, that pity also ought

not to be wanting. The next six months were undoubtedly by far the wretchedest of Friedrich Wilhelm's life.' His violence to his daughter was fearful. She was ordered to her room, and there kept prisoner on low diet, with sentries guarding her doors. As for the crown-prince, he is sent forward to Cüstrin, 'a quiet little town, some seventy miles eastward of Berlin, and lodged in a strong room of the fortress there; no furniture, not even the needfullest; bare walls, lighted from far up; his dress of the plainest prison-cut; his diet fixed at tenpence a day, absolute solitude; no books, except the Bible:' there and thus 'let him wait, till the rather abstruse question of his doom ripen in the royal breast.' Grumkow and Seckendorf are against all violent methods. At length, after six or seven weeks of consultation, it is settled in the tobacco-parliament that Katte and the crown-prince be tried by court-martial as deserters from the Prussian army. Meanwhile, the prince, immured in four bare walls, 'in uninterrupted, unfathomable colloquy with the destinies and necessities,' puts off his defiant humour, and by the middle of October makes a proposal of entire confession. Grumkow is often out at Cüstrin, persuading to the duty of loyally yielding where resistance is impossible. It is a relief, too, to find that the stern regulations with regard to the royal prisoner are gradually ignored by the officials surrounding him. A clever little boy of seven, son to the governor, is allowed to enter the cell, and his little frock being lined with a row of pockets, many things are thus surreptitiously introduced that lighten the horrors of the bare walls. Paper, ink, new literature, and much else, find their way in.

It is on the 25th of October that the court-martial commences work. It decides, after an inquiry of six days, that the accomplices of the crown-prince are two—first, Lieutenant Keith, who, warned by his young master at the time of the explosion on the Rhine, is off, cannot be caught; let him, therefore, be hanged in effigy, cut in four quarters, and nailed to the gallows at Wesel. This sentence his majesty approves. Second, Lieutenant Katte, two years of fortress-arrest to him. 'Not good this,' thinks the inflexible king. The court-martial has to revise this part of the sentence, to bring in Katte's crime high treason, and the penalty—death—death by the headsman and sword, not by the gallows and hot pincers. So far the king's clemency will go. Poor Katte is only twenty-six—surely his fate is very hard.

Five days after the passing of this sentence, it is intimated to him that the carriage intended to take him to Cüstrin is at that moment waiting at the gate—that at Cüstrin he is to die. It was in the gray of the winter morning, 6th of November 1730, that Katte arrived in Cüstrin garrison; about nine o'clock he is on the road towards the rampart of the castle, where a scaffold stands. The prince is already brought down into a lower room to see Katte as he passes ('to see Katte die,' had been the fiendish order of this perhaps poetic, but certainly brutal king). 'His emotions may be fancied but not described.' Again and again he implored, in God's name, that the execution might be stopped till he wrote to his father. 'Impossible!' Oh, the agony of that impossible! 'And so here Katte comes, cheerful loyalty beaming in his face. "Pardonnez moi, mon cher Katte. O that this should be what I have done for you!"

"Death is sweet for a prince I love so well," said Katte, and so on, round some angle of the fortress to his death—not in sight of Frederick, who sank into a faint, and had seen the last of Katte in this world.

This fearful blow, it is evident, 'crushed him down under the immensity of sorrow, confusion, and

despair.' Chaplain Müller, who had prepared young Katte for his end, and remained with him to the last, has orders to stay on at Cüstrin, and seek to reclaim Frederick from certain theological errors which his father suspects and mourns over. This worthy man's correspondence with the king was of 'an assuaging, mutually mollifying character.' He reported 'an excellent knowledge and conviction of the truths of religion in the crown-prince—nay, that he was perfectly at home in the polemic doctrines of the Reformed Calvinistic Church, even to the minutest points.' Meanwhile, the miserable Friedrich Wilhelm could not sleep, had officers to sit up with him every night, and in his slumbers raves and talks of spirits and apparitions. He is occupied in discussing with eight divines a father's unconditional right to give his daughter in marriage to whom he pleases, and—melancholy instance of inconsistency—while agonising over his son's spiritual peril from unsound theories on predestination, his own practice was that of 'never going to bed sober.' As for the sentence pronounced by the court-martial on Frederick, that was severe enough to suit this modern Junius Brutus—as lieutenant-colonel, guilty of desertion, president and members, with the exception of two, have judged him worthy of death. 'But the king's councillors, one and all, interfere vehemently, foreign courts interpose, the kaiser sends an autograph, and 'Friedrich Wilhelm alone, against the whispers of his own heart and the voices of all men, yields—Friedrich's life is to be spared.' We have seen how thoroughly subdued the spirit of the crown-prince had by this time become. In a fortnight after poor Katte's death, he is found ready to sign an oath of 'contrite repentance, and purpose of future entire obedience to the paternal will in all things;' whereupon his sword was restored to him, and his prison-door opened. From Cüstrin fortress he is led to a certain town-mansion, which he is to call his own henceforth, and has a household even in the form of a court, 'though probably the cheapest that was ever set up.' Further, he has employment cut out for him: 'he is to learn economics, and the way of managing domain lands, and is left wholly to himself, save, indeed, that his fellow-creatures are all watching him, and that nothing that he can say or do escapes discussion in the tobacco-parliament. This life, for the youth of eighteen, lasted fifteen months, and of the many lessons that it taught him perhaps the best learned was 'the art of wearing among his fellow-creatures a polite cloak of darkness.' Gradually, he became 'a man politely impregnable to the intrusion of human curiosity; able to look cheerily into the very eyes of men, and talk in a social way face to face, and yet continue intrinsically invisible to them.' The turning-point in this Cüstrin life was the visit of Friedrich Wilhelm to his son, just thirteen months after the catastrophe on the Rhine. We read, with rather a painful suspicion of insincerity, of the crown-prince's abject submission, of his professions of deep repentance, conversion to orthodoxy, according to his father's definition of the word, and devoted filial attachment. We marvel that poor Katte's fate should not have recurred to his mind, to temper the ardour of his protestations. But, according to Mr Carlyle's view of the case, 'this crown-prince has a real affection to his father, as we shall in time convince ourselves. Say, at least, that he is a crown-prince, loyal to fact, and aware that he must surrender thereto.' Nevertheless, there are passages in the correspondence of a certain General Schulenberg, 'instructed by his majesty quietly to keep a monitorial eye on the prince,' with Baron Grumkow, which lead one back to a less favourable theory. The morals acquired at the court of that 'pleasant man of sin,' August of Saxony, do not appear much modified by Cüstrin

discipline; and, spite of outward orthodoxy on the subject of predestination, there were 'plenty of heterodoxies, plenty of strange mutinous fire in the interior of the young man.' Meanwhile, at Berlin, Wilhelmina, betrothed to the Prince of Baireuth, sees her wedding-day draw near; and Friedrich Wilhelm, in his arbitrary way, is energetic in pushing forward building in Berlin; all men 'with the least capital being squeezed hard till they build.' Friedrich's *strasse*, once 'scrag and quagmire,' was made a substantial, clean street, straight as a line, by these hard methods. 'These things were heavy to bear' for the citizens, but pleasant enough to witness for a king who 'is the edile of his country as well as the drill-sergeant, and intent upon sweeping wreck and rubbish from the face of the earth.' On the whole, his life seems much brightened during the last six months—Wilhelmina's 'magnificent wedding' coming off in the November of 1731, and her brother appearing at one of the balls given on the joyous occasion. Changed, she tells us—his face no longer so beautiful as it had been, grown stouter, cold as ice toward this sister once and still so fondly loved, proud, seeming to 'look down on everybody'; and he is not nineteen, this young wearer of the cloak of darkness.

However, the father's heart is softened to his children; he parts with Wilhelmina with sobs and tears of tenderness; and on the last day of February 1732, the crown-prince, completely restored to favour, puts on again the military blue coat as colonel of his regiment, 'never to doff it more.' He did his military duties to a perfection satisfactory even to his father. So far all seems going on well; but another question has arisen in the tobacco-parliament—the prince must marry. Whom shall the crown-prince marry? For his part, he does not much care—the romance is all over.' He looks, however, to outward advantages, and especially to 'ready command of money.' Could but the crown-prince of Prussia have wedded the Archduchess Maria Theresa—the very mate for him, Mr Carlyle thinks, 'so beautiful, magnanimous, and brave.' This, however, is forbidden by the 'papal-protestant' controversy. The imperial court, however friendly, cannot offer its archduchess—can only recommend an 'insignificant niece,' Elizabeth Christina of Brunswick Baden, who by no means suits the prince's notions, unromantic though he be grown. 'Modest and retiring, a God-fearing creature'—thus Friedrich Wilhelm commends—'given to pouting, a blockhead, and, worse, a devotee,' so the prince decries the object of the paternal choice. But the prince seems to have thought better of his bride on a nearer acquaintance; and in the summer of 1733, the wedding took place, the bride being described by the not too partial Wilhelmina as dazzling in complexion, with blond curling hair, and a countenance so innocent and infantine, you might think it belonged to a child of twelve.

Besides these personal charms, this young wife turned out possessed of an 'honest, guileless heart,' and of 'considerable inarticulate sense,' and seems 'to have shaped herself successfully to the prince's taste.' 'These first seven years she always regarded as the flower of her life.' Probably, their most important event, as bearing upon the after-life and character of her husband, was the beginning of his correspondence with Voltaire. Always an admirer of French literature, Voltaire's epic poem, 'model history, sublime tragedies' bloom fresh in Frederick's memory and heart; nor has Voltaire's philosophy less charm for him. This correspondence, begun when Frederick was only twenty-four, and Voltaire forty, lasted during their mutual life, with notable interruptions, however. 'With another theory of the universe than the Voltaire one, how much other had Frederick, too, been; for, however bitter their quarrels, it is

certain that 'Voltaire continued to be Frederick's chief thinker all his days,' and was officially priest and prophet to the working-king. Literature was the great light of the crown-prince's present existence, and his 'chosen soul's employment the flower of life;' to him was the writing of his first book—the *Anti-Macchiavel*—a work which Mr Carlyle characterises as a clear distinct treatise indeed; yet, 'treatise fallen more extinct to existing mankind, it would not be easy to name.'

But we must hurry on. These days of 'free interchange of poetries and prose,' of devotion to literature, philosophy, and music—this 'idyl' in his stormy life is nearly over.

In the November of 1739, 'there is game, as usual, at Wusterhausen, but little or no hunting for the king'—his health has been breaking up rapidly these last few years. One severe attack in the autumn of 1734 he got over, contrary to all expectation; now, this chill caught at an evening-party at General Schulenberg's—is this the death-stroke? He is much in and out of bed—still does his official business with punctuality—can paint, whittle, chisel as in that fit of gout twelve years ago; but he rallies little, and but for a short time, during all the long winter. The spring seems to revive him somewhat, and towards the end of April he resolved to move to Potsdam. The public thought he was recovering; 'he himself knew other.' It was on the 27th that he went; he said: 'Fare-thee-well, then, Berlin; I am to die in Potsdam.'

On Thursday the 26th of May, an express reaches Frederick: 'He is to come quickly if he would see his father again alive. He comes in all haste to find his father rallied for a while—out of doors even. At sight of his son, the king threw out his arms; the son, kneeling, sank upon his breast, and they embraced with tears.' Perhaps the emotion was too much; the king had to be carried in at once, and bed was the only place for him. That very day, he gave instructions about his funeral.

He has had his coffin ready for some time, 'a stout piece of carpentry, at which he looks with satisfaction, remarking how well he shall sleep there.' For the next three days, he had long private dialogues with his son; these two hearts understood each other at last. Once he says to his sympathetic generals: 'Am I not happy to have such a beloved son?' 'His state now was fluctuating, uncertain, restless: the wild son of nature looking into life and death, into judgment and eternity, finds that these things are very great.' He prays much; he has his favourite hymns sung to him; he takes leave of his chaplain; he kisses his little boy of four for the last time. Then—it is the 31st of May—he has himself rolled into Queen Sophie's room; he tells her that he is going to die, and that she must be with him. He resolves to abdicate wholly in favour of his good son Frederick in the presence of his ministers. Before the declaration can be read through, he faints away, and is carried to bed. Still there were ups and downs—the cordage of a most strong heart rending itself piece by piece.' It was the season when his servants got their new liveries. 'O vanity! O vanity!' cries the king at the sight. 'Pray for me; my trust is in the Saviour,' he often said. He will have a mirror brought to look at his dying face. 'Feel my pulse, Pitsch,' said he to the surgeon of his favourite regiment. 'How long will this last?'

'The pulse is gone!' was the sorrowful reply.

'Impossible! How could I move my fingers so?'

The surgeon shakes his head.

'Lord Jesus, to thee I live, to thee I die.' These were Friedrich Wilhelm's last words. Between one and two o'clock that afternoon, he died. That night, Frederick went to Berlin, met by acclamations

enough. The next morning, he was awakened by the regiment under his windows swearing fealty to the new king. Pöllnitz found him hurrying distractedly to and fro, wildly weeping.

'He was in great suffering,' suggested Pöllnitz; 'he is now at rest.'

'True,' replied the young king; 'he suffered, but he was here with us; and now'—

Here Mr Carlyle ends his very remarkable work, the interest of which it were scarcely possible to exaggerate. But it is an interest fraught with deepest melancholy. We borrow the words of an acute critic as best explaining why the historical writings of Mr Carlyle have so depressing an influence on the mind of the reader: 'Their mood is for the most part ironical. There is philanthropy, doubtless, at the bottom of it all; but a mocking spirit, a profound and pungent irony, are the manifest and prevailing characteristics. It is philanthropy which has borrowed the manner of Mephistophiles.'

COUSIN ABEL.

I AM myself of a modest and retiring disposition, averse to self-assertion and egotism. Independence of character seems to me little better than social isolation, and I much prefer to it a residence upon the great continent of Commonplace. It may be well imagined that I have let slip many opportunities of greatness through this ultra bashfulness; high social positions; vast sums of money; the hand and fortune of a March—but this is boastfulness, a weakness as foreign to my character as angry passions to the lily.

Nature, however—with the theory of compensation in her mind, perhaps, at the time of his creation—has formed my Cousin Abel in a very different mould. I doubt, indeed, whether his indomitable spirit ever brooked to be moulded, even in her plastic hands. He must have leaped out of her head, full armed for controversy, like the goddess of old. He was, from his earliest youth, what Mr Leech's miner denominated the conciliating curate, 'a beggar to argue,' a stiffish one to tackle upon any mortal subject; and for the matter of that, he would contradict a bishop upon his own ground. Indeed, my first recollection of him dates from a combat which he held, *à l'outrance*, with no less a person than his own diocesan, a courtly spiritual lord, who had married into the temporal peerage without any decrease, we may be sure, of his own dignified and superior bearing. It was after dinner; and the company, who were mostly clerical, were discussing, in addition to some excellent port, one of Paley's celebrated cases of conscience, where he affirms, for various excellent reasons, that it is permissible for a fashionable person's servant to declare that his master or mistress be 'not at home,' when, as a matter of fact, they are at home. The bishop and the majority of the clergy controverted this position, and my cousin—probably on that account—sustained it.

'You should direct your servant to say that you are "particularly engaged,"' quoth his lordship.

'That would very much incense me, if I happened to be the visitor,' replied my cousin; 'and beside that, I should not believe him.'

'Then the lady or gentleman should cause the servant to state in plain words, so that there could be no mistake, the nature of the occupation in which his master or mistress was engaged. The visitor

would thereby perceive that the excuse was in reality valid and sufficient.'

'Then, if myself and Mrs Abel were to call at the palace to-morrow, in your absence, my lord, and your wife happened to be washing her feet, do you mean to say that your servant would have orders to inform us that the Lady Christiana was at that moment'—

At this point, however, the bishop hastened to give in to my cousin's opinion; and indeed there was no knowing what supposititious cases he might not have put.

When Cousin Abel was a very young man indeed, he chose to fly in the face of his whole family—who are extremely 'genteel'—by going into trade, and becoming the partner of a far-away cousin who had disgraced himself in the linen-draper's line. Whereupon the baronet of our race—for we do possess one (as you would soon discover if you were acquainted with any one of us), who is our *Deus ex machina* upon all similar occasions, was requested to bring the weight of his position and advice to bear upon his erring young relative; and he was kind enough to do so. His oration was doubtless very eloquent, as it certainly was very prolonged; and Sir Richard imagined at the end of it—so humble and resigned had the victim seemed from first to last—that he had shaken Cousin Abel's purpose until every leaf of it had fallen to the ground. When all was over, however, the young man had just one question to ask.

'By the by, Sir Richard, you, who know everything, will perhaps be kind enough to inform me— But stay; I have forgotten the name: what is the name of that great capitalist in the city?'

'Rothschild?'

'No, Sir Richard—not Rothschild.'

'Baring?'

'No, sir; thank you very much, but not Baring either.'

'Jones Loyd, that was?'

'That's it! Yes, Jones Loyd. Can you inform me, Sir Richard—and it is the only remark I have to offer upon your most judicious and condescending advice—how that Jones Loyd made his money?'

'No, Mr Abel, I really can not,' replied the baronet, annoyed at the young man's persistency.

'Why, he got it entirely by minding his own business, Sir Richard; by minding his own business.'

And Cousin Abel signed his articles of partnership the very next day.

One more example to illustrate my cousin's character, and there will then be no possible misunderstanding of it. When his wife died, to whom he was, in truth, devotedly attached, nothing annoyed him more, except her death, than the commiserations and condolences of his friends. He is one of these pitiable persons who ignore the advantages of friendship and sympathy, and hang upon their lonely hooks in the great human larder, until they are good for nothing and offensive to everybody.

'It must have been a great trial to you, sir,' observed an incautious acquaintance, referring to my cousin's late bereavement; 'it must have been a very great trial.' 'A trial, sir?' exclaimed the exasperated widower: 'it was not only a trial, sir, but, let me tell you, a matter also of very considerable expense!'

How Cousin Abel came by this cynical and independent temper of his, I have not, as was before observed, the least idea; but one really would think that he had lost (not his life, but) his liver, in the civil service of the East India Company—he is such a very obstinate and pig-headed old gentleman. Nevertheless, I am bound to say that—at the loss of friendships, of good temper, of kindly feeling, of all,

in a word, that constitutes social happiness—Cousin Abel has made his way in the world. It is almost as impossible to 'do' him, to overreach or backwink him in any way, as to persuade him out of an opinion. On the rare occasions, therefore, when this too astute relative of mine is 'done,' there is joy in the heart of everybody who knows him; and he was 'done' upon a recent occasion, as follows, very completely.

In the town where my Cousin Abel lives, there had been a great many storms connected with local politics, and the atmosphere was only cleared at last by no less a thunderbolt than a murder. At a certain committee meeting of the 'party of order' and of 'civil and religious liberty' combined, one gentleman who was making some personal remarks was knocked on the head by another gentleman who didn't like them; and the first gentleman paid the penalty with his life. Of the assault there was no doubt whatever, but the difficulty lay in proving that the accused used any weapon. The mortal wound had clearly been inflicted by means of a blunt instrument, which had perforated the skull nearly two inches, and which could scarcely have been the prisoner's thumb. There was no such instrument in the committee-room, or found upon the prisoner's person, and the jury were sadly puzzled, and could come to no decision at all.

Cousin Abel happened to be serving his country—it is needless to say, compulsorily—by being one of the twelve, and the most cantankerous—it is equally needless to add—of the whole lot. They were locked up, after the court rose, in an apartment of a little inn, with nothing to eat; the evening was far advanced, and there were a pair of flaring 'dips' upon the table, but no snuffers. It was upon this grievance that my cousin's intelligent mind was solely concentrated, rather to the exclusion of the life-and-death matter then on hand. Why was he not provided with snuffers? That was what he wanted to know, when consulted by his brother-jurymen about the murder. 'Food and firing,' urged he, 'the law was able to deprive them of, since they could not agree; but the law never contemplated this depriving them of snuffers; and he, for one, would insist upon his rights.' 'The snuffers!' demanded he, when his angry tugs at the bell were answered by a policeman, instead of a waiter; and, 'bring me the snuffers, you villain!' was his cry out of window, to the landlord, whenever he could catch a sight of him.

Had it not been for this distracting omission, there is little doubt that my cousin would have given in his vote against the prisoner, since his heart by no means naturally leant to mercy's side; but he was exasperated by the neglect of his wishes, and more than ever inclined to oppose singly any conclusion arrived at by eleven of his fellow-countrymen; so that, when they at last decided upon a verdict of 'guilty,' they found their brother-jurymen only less determined upon 'not guilty,' than he was upon procuring the snuffers. These last, indeed, he never managed to obtain; but the verdict—thanks to his powerful constitution, and to some walnuts, which he had in his pocket—he did manage to get changed, after twenty-four hours; and the prisoner was consequently acquitted.

Now, it happened that the landlord of the inn was a personal crony of the accused party, and knew well enough, himself, with what instrument the crime had been committed. His passionate friend had, unobserved, taken up the snuffers, which lay upon the committee-room table, and inflicted the wound with their point; and thence it was that the jury were denied a pair, for fear the appearance of them should at once remove their difficulty by suggesting the real weapon which had been employed.

Cousin Abel fumed and fretted enough, we may be certain, when he came to learn the mistake into which

his obstinacy had led him; and I know of scarcely anything which, to this day, puts up his irascible back more easily than any allusion to Snuffers.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE close of last year brought good news from Africa, and intelligence of travels and explorations in other quarters. Dr Livingstone had succeeded in getting up the river as far as Tete, and further, and seemed hopeful of accomplishing his object. Great was the joy of his Makalolo, who had waited so long for his return, at seeing him again, though thirty of the faithful fellows had been carried off by small-pox, and six killed by a rebel chief. The health of the Europeans was good; but the engine of the steam-launch disappointed expectation, and had been named the *Asthenatic*. About thirty hundredweights of coal, the first ever dug in that region, had been got, of good quality; a deposit of specular iron-ore had been discovered, and ebony, teak, and lignum-vite in the forests on the river-banks. One point worth notice is, that Dr Livingstone thinks the river will prove to be easily navigable in all seasons for a vessel drawing not more than thirty inches, if the Portuguese will only drive in a few piles in places where a channel should be scoured.

The news from the Niger expedition is favourable; the new steamer *Sunbeam* had entered the river, and will, it is hoped, make a successful trip up to Timbuctoo.—The emperor of Brazil has commissioned a scientific expedition to explore the interior of his empire, and take note of its botany, mineralogy, geology, and zoology, as well as to determine latitudes by astronomical observations, from which important results are anticipated. The party are all native Brazilians, animated with a desire to shew that their country is in earnest in its endeavours after knowledge and civilisation.—Another expedition is set on foot in Australia, headed by Major Warburton, to try once more to get from south to north. Certain travellers who crossed Lake Torrenza, and were then missing for a while, and given up as lost, made their way down to the coast, and report that they found the interior to be well watered, and not a desert, as is commonly believed.—At St Petersburg, a report has lately been published, received from a Russian traveller on the Amour, giving particulars of the botany and geography of the country watered by that great river. There are large forests of valuable timber, and on the borders of the Ussuri, a river flowing out of China, he found the sparse Chinese population familiar with the potato, cultivating it as an ordinary article of food, on an alluvial soil eminently fertile. The mouth of the Amour, under 53 degrees north, is in a less favourable climate than its upper course: snow falls within the first ten days of October; the river is frozen by the middle of November, an intense cold follows, and the navigation remains closed till the end of the first week in May. Hence, vessels can enter the river only during six months of the year. While thus engaged in the far north-east, Russia is actively pushing her trade-enterprise in Europe; and amongst her latest schemes is one for a line of steamers up the Rhine to Tiflis. There is deep policy in all these commercial undertakings; they result in increase of influence as well as of wealth.

In the United States, another polar expedition is talked of. Dr Hayes has read a paper to the Geographical Society of New York, shewing that with a vessel of one hundred tons and a dozen men, he will make his way up Smith's Sound, verify Dr Kane's discoveries, and push on to the pole. We should be glad to see Brother Jonathan try his hand once more

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in the arctic regions, and emulate the scientific researches there carried on by British explorers. The coming summer will, it is thought, bring news of him, and of his search for traces of Sir John Franklin.

Notwithstanding the failure of the Atlantic cable, electric telegraphs are making progress. The line from Sydney to Adelaide and Melbourne is at work; the cable laid from Galle across the Strait of Mannar to Madras is now open to the public. The coast-line from Madras to Calcutta is complete, and in November last, the arrival of the overland mail at Galle was signaled to Calcutta in twenty-four hours. The line from Kurachee to Bombay is also complete; and now there is not a city of importance in India which is not in telegraphic communication with the seat of government.—It has been suggested that a cable laid from the Cape de Verdes to St Paul's in Brazil, a distance of about 900 miles, would be the easiest way of communicating with South America. Meanwhile, Professor Trowbridge in his report addressed to the superintendent of the United States Coast-survey, denies the existence of the plateau said to stretch along the bottom of the Atlantic from Newfoundland to Ireland, drawing his conclusions from two sets of soundings made in the most careful manner. He ascribes a general untrustworthiness to the deep-sea soundings which were much talked about a year or two ago. He thinks it demonstrated that the friction of even a small line when a great length is run out, is sufficient to hold the lead in suspension, and that the true way would be to have the coil of line enclosed within the lead, so that the lead as it sinks shall not have to drag the line after it. This is a suggestion which perhaps may be turned to account by practical men. Time would be saved by a weight descending at a uniform rate, irrespective of depth. At present, it takes one hour and a half to sink 3000 fathoms. Professor Trowbridge believes the range of error in the Atlantic soundings to be 500 fathoms, which if correct, shews that high hills may have altogether escaped discovery by the vessels employed in taking the depth.

Mr Hearder of Plymouth, a name deservedly well known in electrical science, makes it appear that the construction of the Atlantic cable was essentially faulty, the conductor being much too small. He explains the law that, if we take a length of copper-wire as a conductor, we find that a wire of twice the thickness will conduct twice as well. A wire good for two hundred miles will not be good for a thousand, unless ten times thicker. Moreover, although gutta-percha is a good insulator, there is a constant loss of signaling power, for the electricity oozes out along the whole length of the cable. The discussion of these views will perhaps lead to the desired improvement, and we entertain no doubt of eventual success in establishing telegraphic communication across the Atlantic. Mr Hearder says that the present cable need not be regarded as lost, but may be employed as the return-wire, instead of working, in technical phrase, 'to earth;' whereby a considerable saving of power would be effected. While matters are maturing for a new attempt, a company has started for a comprehensive system of telegraphic communication throughout London. They propose to stretch their wires above the house-tops, and send messages for a uniform charge of 4d.

An interesting paper read before the Society of Arts by Mr Wray has given cotton-spinners, and cotton-growers too, something important to think about. The quantity required by England annually is 920,000,000 pounds. The United States cultivates 7,000,000 acres of cotton, and produces 3,000,000 bales. According to Mr Wray, there are in India

double that number of acres under cotton, producing from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 bales a year for home consumption—that is, for India itself. This is a fact not generally known; it may be accepted as an indication that cotton-growing in our reconquered empire is hopelessly extensible; and with labourers, willing to work for 6s. a month, Mr Wray recommends Englishmen to start and cultivate on their own account, instead of buying from the natives.

Among the special prizes offered by the Society of Arts in their list just published, is their gold medal, 'for the discovery of a substitute for cotton, to be produced in such quantities and at such cost as will render it available for commercial and manufacturing purposes.' We notice besides a few items from the general list. An account is wanted of the stones used for building purposes in the United Kingdom; of the methods at present in use for ventilating coal-mines, with suggestions for improvement; and of a new and economic means of producing aluminum commercially. Prizes are held out for the discovery or manufacture of a new smokeless fuel; for improvements in dyeing and new dyeing materials; for elastic gas-tubes; for oils from coal, shale, &c., suitable for illuminating purposes; for railway transit on common roads; and 'for the production of an efficient means of carrying out the system of oceanic electric telegraphs between distant countries.' These are but a few selected from a long list of practical subjects, in which ingenuity of every kind may find exercise. The plans or essays are to be sent in by the 31st of March in this year, or 1860.

Further progress has been made in various places with gunnery experiments. A gun, recently manufactured by Mr Armstrong of Newcastle-on-Tyne, on being tried at Shoeburyness, sent a thirty-two pound ball a distance of 9600 yards—more than five miles: an astonishing result with so heavy a ball. At 625 yards distance, the ball penetrates solid oak nine feet in thickness. There is another advantage of mighty import connected with this singular piece of artillery, that it works with unerring accuracy by night as well as day.—Captain Blakely shews that it is quite possible to make cannon and mortars which shall bombard a place effectually at a distance of five miles; but the things must be properly made. It is now ascertained that increasing the thickness of a cannon or mortar does not make it proportionately stronger; and for the reason that, as the discharge is so sudden, the outside bears no part of the strain. The same reasoning applies to the hydraulic press. The remedy lies—as demonstrated by Mr Longridge, at a meeting of the United Service Institution—in using coils of wire. He makes his cylinder of iron not more than three-quarters of an inch thick, and binds it round with wire, sixteen to the inch, till the wire forms a continuous layer half an inch thick, by which the thickness of the cylinder is increased to an inch and a quarter. Thin as this is, in comparison with cylinders constructed in the ordinary way, it is found to bear an inside pressure of seven tons to the inch. Thus, light cannon bound round with wire, will be far more serviceable than thick heavy cannon.

We are reminded by these remarkable facts of a communication made some time ago to the Philosophical Society of Manchester by Mr John Graham, 'On the Consumption of Coals, and rate of Evaporation from Engine-boilers.' The conclusions arrived at, after a course of painstaking experiments, were, that James Watt's wagon-shaped boiler is the best; 'that a supplementary boiler, under very favourable circumstances, gives a saving of 15 per cent.;' that scraping the flues and sides of the boiler once a week saves 2 per cent.; 'that a difference in the setting alone of the same boiler may readily produce a difference

in the result amounting to 21 per cent.;' and 'that a difference in firing only will produce a difference in the result of 13 per cent.' The prevention of 'scale'—that is, the incrustation formed on the inside of boilers—is shewn to be perfectly possible; and besides this, a fact comes out which, to many persons, will be astonishing. 'When a boiler,' says Mr Graham, 'is worked solely for the purpose of heating, by means of its steam, dye-vessels, soap-cisterns, &c., if we take its available power with the steam at 2½ pounds pressure as equal to 100; at 7 pounds pressure it will be 120, and at 10 pounds it will be 130; the same quantity of coals being consumed in each case. Or this surprising result, at present unaccounted for, may be thus stated: The same weight of coals consumed in the same number of hours, will work ten cisterns with the steam at 2½ pounds' pressure, twelve cisterns at 7 pounds, and thirteen cisterns at 10 pounds.'

We hear of a plan by Mr Richardson for getting rid of the smoke of private houses, without alterations of the fireplace. He erects an iron pedestal in one of the upper rooms, into which the smoke from the chimneys is led, and there washed by numerous jets of water, with which it descends into a drain, and so is carried away without rising at all into the air. At the same time, the waste heat from the fires warms the room through the pedestal, and a supply of water may be kept hot for household uses.

In the matter of decimalisation, that which government refuses to do, is, like many other useful things, undertaken by private enterprise. Liverpool and Hull are discontinuing the use of the common hundredweight, that is, 112 pounds, and adopting instead thereof the 'cental,' which, as its name indicates, is a weight of one hundred pounds. This is a wise proceeding, and is following up what was done long ago by France and the United States. How long will it be before London, so proud of its Cockneyism, will follow the example?

There are a few words to be said, and of gratifying import, concerning the Patent Office—a subject in which art and science are deeply interested. Any person seeking information may now apply at the office in Southampton Buildings, sure of civility, and of not being called on to pay a fee for every question to which he requires an answer. The specifications as far back as the reign of James II. have been printed and arranged for easy reference; hence, before taking out a patent, it is now possible to discover whether anything of the kind has been patented before, without the wearisome, disappointing, and expensive task of searching the rolls. What those rolls were, many inventors know to their sorrow; there was no attempt at classification; and a Dundee man, once searching for a specification of a mode of dressing flax, found it next to a lord-chancellor's letter of resignation. Besides this, sundry old and scarce treatises by early inventors have been reprinted for sale; a special library and collection of portraits is in course of formation; so that, altogether, the Patent Office stands out as a bright spot in our civil service, highly creditable to Mr Bennett Woodcroft. We hear that a new office is to be built in the vacant ground behind Burlington House, where the several collections and documents may be seen and consulted with ample space and accommodation.

In a paper read before the Geological Society, 'On the Geological Structure of the North of Scotland,' Sir Roderick Murchison takes occasion to notice 'the great value of the Caithness flags as paving-stones; their extraordinary durability being due to a certain admixture of lime and bitumen—the latter derived from fossil fishes—with silica and alumina, while in some parts they contain bitumen enough to render them of economic value.' The region is interesting in

another sense, on account of the numerous fossils and footsteps in sandstone slabs recently found there. One of the fossils, the *Stagonolepis*, is a remarkable reptile partaking of the character of the crocodile and lizard; yet, as Professor Huxley says, 'it widely diverges from all known and recent fossil forms, and throws no clear light on the age of the deposit in which it occurs.' It is, in fact, a higher order of reptile than those of the age to which it might be supposed to belong.

We mentioned some time ago the discovery in Cambridgeshire—in the fen country—of a large deposit of fossil coprolites which had been found valuable as manure. The discovery has been followed up, and with most unexpected results. The coprolites are imbedded in a vein of clay from three to six feet beneath the surface, and the vein itself has a thickness of from six inches to three feet, running down in places to deep pockets. The width of the vein is ascertained to be a quarter of a mile, and its length is supposed to be equal to that of the fen—fifty miles; when we consider that the contents per acre range from 150 to 200 tons, we can form an idea of the importance of these eastern counties diggings. Near Burwell, numerous diggers have been at work for months getting out the clay, and washing the fossils; and English agriculturists may soon supply themselves with a fertiliser which contains full 70 per cent. of phosphate of lime, without sending for it to the guano rocks of the Pacific Ocean. The owners of the land traversed by the vein of clay will doubtless make an enormous profit.

We conclude with a fact highly interesting to physiologists. M. L. Ollier of Lyon has discovered that, if a portion of the periosteum be taken from the surface of a living bone, and buried in the flesh of the back, hip, &c., it will grow into real bone, with a channel for marrow in the interior. The bone, moreover, will grow into any shape into which it may be bent when grafted into the flesh. It is thought that surgeons will be able to make this fact available in their cures of broken limbs.

CANDLEMAS-DAY.

THIS the appointed day on which we throw
Yule-berries in the flame;
While still the bleak wind breathes through blinding
snow,
Cold as when Christmas came.

Colder, and far more dreary looks the world;
Graver our life within:
But see, the holly sprigs are dim and curled;
Let us our work begin!

Take down each leaf, each dusty withered spray;
And when the crackling pile
Hisses and flames, and startling burns away,
We can look on and smile.

And none shall know that in my heart goes on
The same sad work unseen:
Bright things were treasured there when Christmas
shone,
And they seemed evergreen.

But oh! how soon they faded and they fell!
Pride kindles—and they die:
Die, happy dreams, unhonoured, for your knell
Is but a soft low sigh.

JUDITH.

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